

In the claims:

1           1. (Currently Amended) A system development method for developing a system  
2    using a development-support system made up of a server used to provide information about  
3    functional units each implementing a different function and files describing said different  
4    functions, at least one developer client to develop said functional units and at least one user  
5    client to develop said system configured to perform desired operations by combining said  
6    functional units, wherein all of said server, said at least one developer client, and said at  
7    least one user client are connected through an internet, comprising:

8           a first step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of registering an operator of  
9    said user client as a user of said development-support system ;

10          a second step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of obtaining, by referring  
11    to information about said functional units, files describing a plurality of said functional  
12    units which are needed for development of said system;

13          a third step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of developing said system  
14    by combining files describing said plurality of said functional units;

15          a fourth step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of transmitting question  
16    information about at least one of said functional units or keyword information regarding  
17    information required for development of said system to said server, when said system does  
18    not operate properly due to malfunctions of said at least one of said functional units or  
19    when said information required for development of said system using said at least one of  
20    said functional units is to be acquired;

21          a fifth step, taken by said server, of:

22           accepting and registering said question information, said registering  
23    including storing said question information in association with said at least one functional  
24    unit, and

25           transmits said question information to said at least one developer client of  
26    said at least one of said functional units;

27           a sixth step, taken by said at least one developer client, of transmitting reply  
28   information to said question information to said server,

29           a seventh step, taken by said server, of registering said reply information, said  
30   registering including storing said reply information in association with said at least one of  
31   said function units,

32           a eighth step of transmitting said reply information only to (1) other user clients and  
33   other developer clients who have already acquired said at least one of said functional units  
34   and (2) other user clients and other developer clients who have acquired a right to acquire  
35   said at least one of said functional units and have not yet acquired said at least one of said  
36   functional units and

37           a ninth step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of obtaining, when  
38   necessary, a file of another functional units, based on said reply information to said  
39   question information or on said information retrieved according to said keyword  
40   information and, if necessary, of changing design to develop said system and checking  
41   operations of the resulting ~~system~~ system,

42           wherein, in said second step, said files of said plurality of said functional units are  
43   allowed to be obtained only when an application for individual or collective acquisition of  
44   said files is made and a right to acquire said files is granted through examination of the  
45   application for acquisition of each of said functional units or of every collective group of  
46   said functional units.

1           2. (Cancelled)

1           3. (Original) The system development method according to Claim 1, wherein, in  
2   said fourth step, when any question about said functional units that has been already asked  
3   is contained in said question information, a notification informing that said question about  
4   said functional units has been already asked is provided, and other information required for  
5   development of said system is able to be obtained.

1           4. (Previously Presented)   The system development method according to Claim  
2   1, wherein said reply information to said question information is additionally transmitted to  
3   a user having wanted to obtain said files but having not yet obtained said files and, when  
4   there is a model functional unit that has been used as a model for development of said  
5   functional unit, a user having developed said model functional unit.

1           5. (Previously Presented)   The system development method according to Claim  
2   1, further comprising a tenth step of transmitting, when said developer of said at least one of  
3   said functional units has found a malfunction of said at least one of said functional units,  
4   contact information notifying that said at least one of said functional units have said  
5   malfunction and information about a method for taking a measure against said malfunction.

1           6. (Original) The system development method according to Claim 1, wherein said  
2   system is a semiconductor device and said functional unit is a basic logic element or a  
3   basic logic circuit constructed by combining a plurality of said basic logic elements.

1           7. (Original) The system development method according to Claim 1, wherein said  
2   system is a semiconductor device and said functional units include a central processing  
3   unit, storage device, buffer, and peripheral device and wherein a file of said peripheral  
4   device is so constructed as to be able to select either of a file to implement its function by  
5   using hardware or a file to implement its function by using software.

1           8. (Original) The system development method according to Claim 1, wherein said  
2   system is software and said functional units are routines or objects to perform  
3   predetermined processing.

1           9. (Currently Amended)   A storage medium storing system development  
2   program for causing a computer to execute a method for developing a system using a  
3   development-support system made up of a server used to provide information about

4 functional units each implementing a different function and files describing said different  
5 functions, at least one developer client to develop said functional units and at least one user  
6 client to develop said system configured to perform desired operations by combining said  
7 functional units, wherein all of said server, said at least one developer client, and said at  
8 least one user client are connected through an internet, comprising:

9 a first step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of registering an operator of  
10 said user client as a user of said development-support system ;

11 a second step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of obtaining, by referring  
12 to information about said functional units, files describing a plurality of said functional  
13 units which are needed for development of said system;

14 a third step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of developing said system by  
15 combining files describing said plurality of said functional units;

16 a fourth step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of transmitting question  
17 information about said at least one of said functional units or keyword information  
18 regarding information required for development of said system to said server, when said  
19 system does not operate properly due to malfunctions of said at least one of said functional  
20 units or when said information required for development of said system using said at least  
21 one of said functional units is to be acquired;

22 a fifth step, taken by said server, of:

23 accepting and registering said question information, said registering  
24 including storing said question information in association with said at least one functional  
25 unit, and

26 transmits said question information to said at least one developer client of  
27 said at least one of said functional units;

28 a sixth step, taken by said at least one developer client, of transmitting reply  
29 information to said question information to said server,

30 a seventh step, taken by said server, of registering said reply information, said  
31 registering including storing said reply information in association with said at least one of  
32 said function units,

33           a eighth step of transmitting said reply information only to (1) other user clients and  
34    other developer clients who have already acquired said at least one of said functional units  
35    and (2) other user clients and other developer clients who have acquired a right to acquire  
36    said at least one of said functional units and have not yet acquired said at least one of said  
37    functional units and

38           a ninth step, to be taken by said at least one user client, of obtaining, when  
39    necessary, a file of another functional units, based on said reply information to said  
40    question information or on said information retrieved according to said keyword  
41    information and, if necessary, of changing design to develop said system and checking  
42    operations of the resulting system. system,

43           wherein, in said second step, said files of said plurality of said functional units are  
44    allowed to be obtained only when an application for individual or collective acquisition of  
45    said files is made and a right to acquire said files is granted through examination of the  
46    application for acquisition of each of said functional units or of every collective group of  
47    said functional units.

1           10. (Currently Amended)   A development-support system comprising:  
2           a server used to provide information about functional units each implementing a  
3    different function and files describing said different function,  
4           at least one developer client to develop said functional units:  
5           at least one user client to develop a system configured to perform desired  
6    operations by combining said functional units; and  
7           wherein all of said server, said at least one developer client, and said at least one  
8    user client are connected through an internet,  
9           wherein said at least one user client obtains files of a plurality of said functional  
10    units, develops said system by combining files of said plurality of functional units and  
11    checks operations of the developed system and, as a result, when said developed system  
12    does not operate properly due to a malfunction of any one of said functional units,

13 transmits question information about said malfunction of said malfunctioning functional  
14 unit to said server,

15 wherein said server, after having accepted and registered said question  
16 information, transmits said question information to said at least one developer client of said  
17 malfunctioning functional unit,

18 wherein said at least one developer client transmits reply information to said  
19 question information to said server,

20 wherein said server:

21 accepts and registers said reply information, said registering  
22 including storing said reply information in association with said malfunctioning function  
23 unit, and,

24 transmits said reply information only to said at least one user client,  
25 other user clients ~~having registered for said malfunctioning function unit and another~~  
26 ~~developer client having an interest in said malfunctioning functional unit, and other~~  
27 ~~developer clients who have already obtained files of said malfunctioning functional unit,~~  
28 ~~and other user clients and other developer clients who have acquired a right to obtain said~~  
29 ~~files of said malfunctioning functional unit and have not yet obtained said files of said~~  
30 ~~malfunctioning functional unit,~~

31 wherein said at least one user client makes an application for acquisition of each  
32 of a plurality of functional units or of said plurality of functional units collectively, said  
33 server examines said application for each of said plurality of functional units or for said  
34 plurality of functional units collectively and grants said at least one user client a right to  
35 acquire, and said at least one user client, based on the granted right, obtains files of said  
36 functional unit from said server.

1 11. (Cancelled)

1 12. (Original) The development-support system according to Claim 10,  
2 wherein said server, only when said question information has been registered as coming  
3 from a user of said development-support system and said question information has been

4 transmitted from a user having obtained files of said functional units, accepts said question  
5 information.

1                   13. (Original)       The development-support system according to Claim 10,  
2 wherein said server, when having already accepted and registered said question information  
3 about said functional units, registers said question information together with question  
4 information that has been already registered and transmits contents of said registration to  
5 said developer client.

1                   14.( Previously Presented)   The development-support system according to Claim  
2 10, wherein said server transmits a date when a reply to said question information should  
3 be made by said at least one developer client and, if there is no reply by said date, transmits  
4 information urging said at least one developer client to make a reply and, if there is still no  
5 reply even after said date, again transmits information urging said at least one developer  
6 client to make a reply on every predetermined date.

1           15. (Previously Presented) The development-support system according to Claim  
2   14, wherein said server transmits information notifying that a predetermined penalty is  
3   imposed every time said reply is delayed by said one date behind said date or by said  
4   predetermined dates behind said date, together with said information urging said at least  
5   one developer client to make said reply, and an amount equivalent to said penalty is  
6   automatically drawn from a bank account every time said reply is delayed by one date  
7   behind said date or by predetermined dates behind said date.

1           16. (Previously Presented) The development-support system according to Claim  
2   10, wherein said server accepts said reply information only when said reply information  
3   has been transmitted by a user who has been registered as a user of said development-  
4   support system and who has developed said at least one functional unit.

1           17. (Original)           The development-support system according to Claim 10,  
2   wherein said interested user is a user having obtained said files including a user having  
3   transmitted said question information, a user having wanted to obtain said files but having  
4   not yet obtained said files or, when there is a model functional unit that has been used as a  
5   model for development of said functional unit, a user having developed said model  
6   functional unit.

1           18. (Previously Presented) The development-support system according to Claim  
2   10, wherein said developer client transmits, when said developer of said functional unit has  
3   found a malfunction of said malfunctioning functional unit, contact information notifying  
4   that said malfunctioning functional unit has said malfunction and information about a  
5   method for taking a measure against said malfunction, to said server.

1           19. (Previously Presented) The development-support system according to Claim  
2   10, wherein said system is a semiconductor device and said at least one functional unit is a

3 basic logic element or a basic logic circuit constructed by combining a plurality of said  
4 basic logic elements.

1 20. (Original) The development-support system according to Claim 10,  
2 wherein said system is a semiconductor device and said functional unit is a central  
3 processing unit, storage device, buffer, and peripheral device and wherein a file of said  
4 peripheral device is so constructed as to be able to select either of a file to implement its  
5 function by using hardware or a file to implement its function by using software.

1 21. (Original) The development-support system according to Claim 10,  
2 wherein said system is software and said functional units are routines or objects to perform  
3 predetermined processing.

1 22. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing system development  
2 control programs for causing a computer to execute functions of a development-support  
3 system comprising:

4 a server used to provide information about functional units each implementing a  
5 different function and files describing said different function,

6 at least one developer client to develop said functional units;

7 at least one user client to develop a system configured to perform desired  
8 operations by combining said functional units; and

9 wherein all of said server, said at least one developer client, and said at least one  
10 user client are connected through an internet,

11 wherein said at least one user client obtains files of a plurality of said functional  
12 units, develops said system by combining files of said plurality of functional units and  
13 checks operations of the developed system and, as a result, when said developed system  
14 does not operate properly due to a malfunction of any one of said functional units,  
15 transmits question information about said malfunction of said malfunctioning functional  
16 unit to said server,

17 wherein said server:

18                   accepts and registers said question information, said registering including  
19                   storing said question information in association with said malfunctioning functional unit,  
20                   and

21                   transmits said question information to said developer client which  
22                   developed said malfunctioning functional units,

23                   wherein said developer client transmits reply information to said question  
24                   information to said server,

25                   wherein said server

26                   accepts and registers said reply information, , said registering including  
27                   storing said reply information in association with said malfunctioning functional unit, and  
28                   transmits said reply information only to said at least one user client, other user  
29                   clients ~~having registered for said malfunctioning function unit and another developer client~~  
30                   ~~having an interest in said malfunctioning functional units. and other developer clients who~~  
31                   ~~have already obtained files of said malfunctioning functional unit, and other user clients~~  
32                   ~~and other developer clients who have acquired a right to obtain said files of said~~  
33                   ~~malfunctioning functional unit and have not yet obtained said files of said malfunctioning~~  
34                   ~~functional unit,~~

35                   wherein said at least one user client makes an application for acquisition of each  
36                   of a plurality of functional units or of said plurality of functional units collectively, said  
37                   server examines said application for each of said plurality of functional units or for said  
38                   plurality of functional units collectively and grants said at least one user client a right to  
39                   acquire, and said at least one user client, based on the granted right, obtains files of said  
40                   functional unit from said server.